

## Orthodontic Training in the UK

A report on the current status in 2008

Prepared by M Dixon

Chairman of Training Grades Group of British Orthodontic Society

Primary Draft 26<sup>th</sup> August 2008

### Acknowledgements

The TGG acknowledges the assistance of its local representatives within the UK Orthodontic programs in gathering all the data submitted.

Specific recognition of the contributions made to this report

- H Popat and M Nazir (Orthodontic course costs and format)
- S Henwood and T Ubaya-Naranage (Distribution of training posts)
- J Shah and R Benson (Outcome of training)
- E Thickett (Study leave entitlement)

The TGG are grateful to Iain Hathorne and the Representative Body of the BOS for their support and guidance in the preparation of this report.

### Glossary of Terms

SpR - Specialist Registrar / Trainee

FTTA - Fixed Term Training Appointment (Senior Registrar)

NTN - National Training Number

Non-NTN - Self funded trainee studying equivocal course without accrediting with a CCT

DwSI - Dentist with Specialist Interest

CCT - Certificate of Completion of Training

SAC - Specialist Advisory Committee

GDC - General Dental Council

BOS - British Orthodontic Society

TGG - Training Grades Group

IOTN - Index Of Treatment Need

### Key Findings

- 250 orthodontic trainees in post Spring 2008
  - 129 NTN Specialist Registrars in post
  - 48 FTTA Registrars (consultant level) in post
  - 73 Non-NTN (over-seas) trainees in post
- 16 orthodontic training programs in UK
  - High concentration in South East
  - Associated with well established training programs
  - High retention of trainees in proximity of training programs
  - Salary scale £28K to £45K
  - Research costs incurred by trainees range from £3K to £24K over three years (not subject to tax relief)
- Between 2004 and 2015 around 440 orthodontists will retire
  - a minimum of 40 per year required to keep current provision

- 35 to 40 new specialists accrediting per year
- 86% remaining in UK
- potential shortfall of between 60 and 110 by 2015
- Currently contracting compounds issues of local discrepancy
  - Favours area of historic high provision
  - Needs assessments have been inconsistent and have lacked transparency

## 1. The Training Grades Group of the British Orthodontic Society

1.1. The Training Grades Group (TGG) of the British Orthodontic Society (BOS) is a core group of the BOS and represents those dentists in SAC accredited orthodontic training programs. It currently has around 260 members.

1.2. Part of the group's role is to monitor and report upon those issues pertinent to training.

1.3. In spring 2008 TGG undertook a review of Orthodontic training within the 16 UK Orthodontic training centres. A questionnaire based survey was completed with 100% response from TGG representatives in each program.

1.4. As part of this particular attention was paid to

- Geographical location of courses
- Fluctuations in numbers of trainees
- Cost of courses
- Career choice on completion of training

## 2. Background

2.1. Orthodontics is a sub-specialty of dentistry concerned with growth of the face, development of the bite (occlusion) and prevention or correction of occlusal problems

## 3. Training in orthodontics

Orthodontic training occurs at various levels.

There is a spectrum of orthodontic training within the UK dental workforce, from undergraduate level through to NHS hospital accredited consultant.

### 3.1. Undergraduate training

Ranges from 50 to 126 hours of orthodontic training in total over the five year dental undergraduate training<sup>1</sup>. Focused on diagnosis and basic emergency management. It does not cover in depth treatment planning and complex appliance therapy

### 3.2. General Dental Practitioners (GDP)

General dental practitioners may carry out very simple orthodontic procedures.

### 3.3. Dentists with a Special Interest

General dental practitioners who have completed further training (led by the BOS and FGDP(UK)) with a three year part-time course, leading to the Diploma in Primary Care Orthodontics (DPCO).

In areas that cannot sustain a specialist, there is a need for a number of appropriately trained GDPs / DwSIs who would continue to work under the guidance of a specialist or hospital based consultant mentor. DwSIs can be recognised formally by PCTs but are not eligible for Specialist List registration with the GDC.

### 3.4. Orthodontic Specialists

Registered dentists who have completed minimum three year full-time (or part-time equivalent) at one of 16 training UK programs (or European equivalent). They have accredited with a CCT and a research degree in addition to success in passing a Membership in Orthodontics Examination at one of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons. They have a contemporary knowledge of evidence based best practice, and are recognised as specialists on the Orthodontic Specialist List of the General Dental Council.

### 3.5. Consultants in Orthodontics

Specialist orthodontists who have completed an additional two years training, focusing on the most complex cases, in particular patients with facial deformity, facial clefts and other multidisciplinary cases.

### 3.6. Lecturers and Senior Lecturers in Orthodontics

Specialist orthodontists who have completed an additional three years full-time training including a PhD level degree. They work principally in dental hospital academic departments. There are currently very few trainees in academic orthodontics.

#### 4. Specialist training

4.1. The Specialist Registrar Grade was commissioned in Orthodontics on 1 July 1998 comprising a three year training programme. Entry to the training programme in orthodontics is highly competitive<sup>3</sup>. Structured training takes place in hospital departments linked to university dental schools. The trainee pays course fees to the hospital department / university. The total payable is variable between the different training programmes.

4.2. Eligibility for application for training varies but the essential criteria include holding a dental degree registered with the GDC (usually UK or EU), completion of a period of vocational training and achievement of a post-graduate qualification (MFDS / MJDF)

4.3. The Specialist Advisory Committee (SAC) in Orthodontics quality assures the training programs on behalf of the General Dental Council (GDC) and it expects all trainees to undertake a University higher postgraduate degree, including a research component. It is recommended that this be completed as part of the process of attaining a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) in order to become a GDC accredited specialist in Orthodontics.

4.4. There are various factors thought to influence the national distribution of orthodontic specialists working within the UK. These include the location of orthodontic training schemes, local populations, current access to specialist care and available Primary Care Trust contracts in addition to more general social drivers such as family and support networks<sup>4</sup>.

4.5. Previous reviews of the orthodontic workforce and the distribution of trainees have been undertaken which have used a variety of outcome measures. These have had some success in directing resources to areas of need such as the South West and the West Midlands. A 2007 review of the registered location of orthodontic specialists identified Greater London as having the highest density, followed by Strathclyde and the West Midlands<sup>5</sup>.

4.6. In 2005 Robinson *et al.* identified that 38% of the orthodontic workforce (approx. 440 orthodontists) intended to retire between 2004 and 2015<sup>2</sup>. The UK would need to train and retain an average of 40 new specialists a year to keep track with retirements, and a far greater number if it wishes to provide an orthodontic service comparable to its European counterparts. The same authors showed that the UK is currently 15<sup>th</sup> out of 17 European countries in terms of number of orthodontists per head of population<sup>2</sup>.

4.7. Following the attainment of a CCT and entry onto the GDC Specialist register trainees have various choices of career they may:

- Enter specialist practice in the primary care setting
  - within orthodontic / general practice
  - within the salaried service (Community Service)
- Continue training in a Fixed Term Training Appointment (FTTA)
  - To accredit as a NHS Hospital Consultant
  - To accredit as a University based Lecturer / Senior Lecturer

In the UK twice as many new orthodontists choose careers in specialist practice compared to continuing in the hospital service. The training pathway to become a hospital consultant in the UK is unique in that a trainee undertakes a further 2 years training as an FTTA to attain consultant level. Other countries have only a single 3 year pathway after which the graduate makes their career choice.

#### 5. Location, number and grade of Orthodontic Trainees

5.1. In spring 2008 there were 250 orthodontic trainees, 129 Specialist Registrars (SpR) holding National Training Numbers (NTN), 73 SpRs without NTNs (Non-NTN) (primarily self-funded overseas dentists – not eligible for specialist list entry) and 48 Fixed Term Training Appointment "Senior" Registrars (FTTA). This is comparable to 2007 with the exception of an increase from 47 to 73 for Non-NTN trainees<sup>6</sup>.

5.2. 177 of the current trainees will be eligible for the GDC Specialist List (the remainder are overseas dentists with Non-NTN posts). This equates to between 35 and 40 new specialists (both primary and secondary care) per year becoming eligible for the GDC Specialist list. This figure falls short of the estimated numbers required to keep pace with projected workforce retirements.

5.3. A high concentration of posts are within London at the long established training centres, although over time we have seen expansions in NTN training numbers at most other centres (Table 1 and Figure 1).

5.4. Increasing the numbers of trainees in regions such as the South West and West Midlands has resulted in an increased retention of specialists locally. But this is still less than the retention of orthodontic specialists in the South East.

5.5. There is a dichotomy between maintaining our historically strong academic units in the South East whilst trying to expand provision in other regions.

#### 6. Course Fees

6.1.Orthodontic training course fees range from £1,000 - £9,690 per year and from £3,000 - £24,000 for the entire duration of the training programmes (Table 2).

6.2.Orthodontic trainees have a choice of higher University degrees as part of their three year training programme.Course fees are highly variable and there has been a notable, but expected increase in fees over the last decade (Figure 2).

## 7.Post CCT Career Choices

7.1.Between 2005 and 2007 150 orthodontic SpRs and FTTAs completed training.

7.2.86.8% of NTN-SpR's continue to work in the UK after training, 10.6% went to other EU locations and 2.6% went to non-EU locations.

7.3.63.6% of non-NTN SpR's went to work in non-EU locations, with 26.4% remaining in the UK.

7.4.NTN-SpR's usually go into specialist practice or FTTA positions, but trends for these fluctuated during the survey period.SpR's joining specialist practice dipped to 43% in 2006 from 63% in 2005, and rose back to 58% in 2007.In the same period FTTA appointments rose from 29% in 2005 to 44% in 2006, falling back to 36% in 2007. This coincided with the introduction of the new contract for NHS primary dental care.

## Summary

There are currently 16 training programmes providing specialist orthodontic training in the UK.

There are 250 trainees registered on these programmes of which 129 are in NTN posts leading to registration on the GDC Specialist list for Orthodontics and a further 48 are in FTTA posts leading to accreditation as NHS consultants.These FTTAs are already on the GDC Specialist list.

Annually 35-40 specialist registrars become eligible for the GDC's specialist list whilst a minimum of 40 senior colleagues are retiring annually.

There is a large geographical variation in the number of training programmes and the number of trainees with the largest numbers being concentrated in the South East.

Retention of specialists is highest in the location of the training programmes again particularly in the South East.

14% of trainees are not remaining in the UK.

UK has one of the lowest ratios of orthodontists per head of population in Europe and the number of specialists being registered in the UK each year is not sufficient to keep pace with retirements of senior colleagues, without beginning to address the disparity with our European colleagues.

## 8.References

1.Derringer K A.Undergraduate orthodontic teaching in UK teaching hospitals;BDJ; 2005; 199 (4): 224-32

2.Robinson PG, et al. Report of the orthodontic workforce survey of the United Kingdom. HMSO; 2005

3.*Guidelines for the UK Three-Year Training Programmes in Orthodontics for Specialist Registrars and Other Postgraduate Trainees*, Joint Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry, Specialist Advisory Committee in Orthodontics, December 2003

4.Factsheet 11: Orthodontic new PDS agreements and new GDS contracts Department of Health;2005.

5.Henwood SE. Nixon. F. Steele J. Specialist Orthodontists: Geographical distribution and influencing factors. BOS conference poster 2007

6.Dixon M, A snap-shot of orthodontic trainees.BOS Conference poster 2007

7.Hunt N P, Cochrane S M. Postgraduate Orthodontic Training Programmes in the UK. BJO Educational Supplement 1989; 4: 1-8.

Figure 1: Distribution of Orthodontic Training Posts 2008

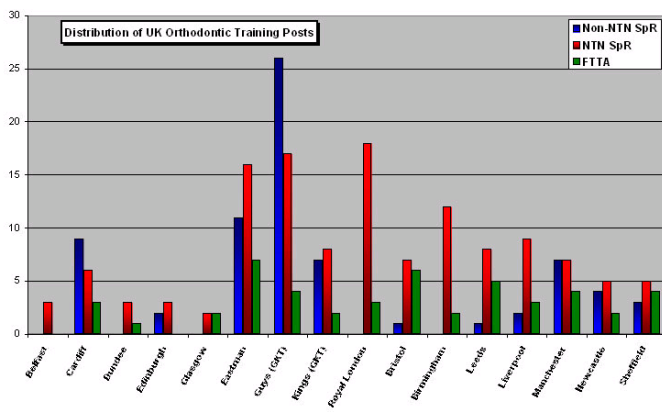


Table 1: Distribution of UK training posts

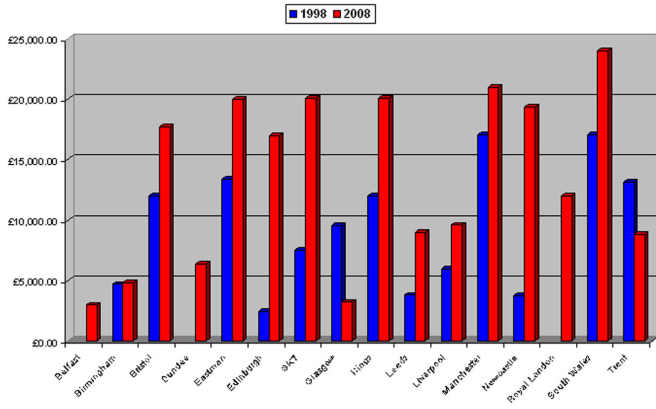
	NTN	Non-NTN	FTFA
Belfast	3	0	0
Cardiff	6	9	3
Dundee	3	0	1
Edinburgh	3	2	0
Glasgow	2	0	2
Eastman	16	11	7
Guys (GKT)	17	26	4
Kings (GKT)	8	7	2
Royal London	18	0	3
Bristol	7	1	6
Birmingham	12	0	2
Leeds	8	1	5
Liverpool	9	2	3
Manchester	7	7	4
Newcastle	5	4	2
Sheffield	5	3	4

Table 2: Training scheme fees (total course)

Training Scheme	Total Course Fees (£)	
	1998 <sup>7</sup>	2008
Belfast	NA	£3,000
Birmingham	£4,710	£4,800
Bristol	£12,000	£17,700
Dundee	NA	£6,400
Eastman	£13,400	£20,000
Edinburgh	£2,490	£17,000
GKT	£7,500	£20,100
Glasgow	£9,540	£3,240
Kings	£12,000	£20,100
Leeds	£3,810	£9,000
Liverpool	£6,000	£9,600
Manchester	£17,100	£21,000
Newcastle	£3,750	£19,380
Royal London	NA	£12,000
South Wales	£17,100	£24,000
Trent	£13,146	£8,800

Figure 2: Orthodontic course fees a ten year comparison

Orthodontic course fees (NTN)



©2012 British Orthodontic Society  
 Built on [Cubik](#)

Registered Charity Number 1073464. The BOS is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales. Company Number 03695486.